

**Amendments to the Claims**

1 Claim 1 (previously presented): A method of enhancing a voice mail message for playback to a  
2 listener, comprising steps of:

3 creating the voice mail message for the listener, by a caller using a telephone device, the  
4 voice mail message comprising a plurality of message segments;

5 identifying, by the caller using the telephone device, at least two of the message segments  
6 which are to have background sounds associated therewith;

7 selecting, for each of the identified message segments by the caller using the telephone  
8 device, a sound to be associated therewith as the background sound, wherein the sounds selected  
9 as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are different sounds; and

10 responsive to a request from the listener for playback of the voice mail message, playing  
11 back at least two of the identified message segments for which a sound was selected to be  
12 associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently playing back the sound selected  
13 as the background sound for each of the played-backed identified message segments, and wherein  
14 the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the played-back identified  
15 message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound played back for the voice  
16 mail message changes at least once during the playback.

Claims 2 - 8 (canceled)

1 Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step  
2 further comprises entering, by the caller using the telephone device, a caller-specific personal

3 identification value, and wherein the entering of the caller-specific personal identification value  
4 causes the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically  
5 selected, without intervention by the caller.

Claim 10 (canceled)

1 Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step  
2 of creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message, wherein  
3 the caller-specific profile indicates which sounds are to be selected as background sounds on  
4 which days; and wherein the selecting step further comprises automatically processing the caller-  
5 specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the  
6 sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected, based  
7 on the day on which the voice mail message is created.

Claims 12 - 13 (canceled)

1 Claim 14 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selected  
2 background sounds are selected randomly from a plurality of available background sounds.

1 Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step  
2 of creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message; and  
3 wherein the selecting step further comprises automatically processing the caller-specific profile,

4 responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the sounds to be  
5 associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected according to the  
6 profile, without intervention by the caller.

Claim 16 (canceled)

1 Claim 17 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step  
2 further comprises selecting each of the sounds, by the caller, from among a plurality of sounds  
3 which are configured as non-updateable sounds selectable from the telephone device.

1 Claim 18 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selected sounds  
2 are selected from among a plurality of sounds that are available to, and offered to the caller by, an  
3 apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded.

Claim 19 (canceled)

1 Claim 20 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step  
2 of transmitting the selected background sounds from the telephone device to an apparatus on  
3 which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 21 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 20, wherein the selected  
2 background sounds are compressed prior to the transmitting.

1 Claim 22 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step  
2 of transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an identifier thereof from the telephone device to  
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, for use by the apparatus to  
4 obtain the played-back sounds.

1 Claim 23 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step  
2 of transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an address thereof from the telephone device to  
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, wherein the transmitted address  
4 for each of the selected sounds is usable for locating a file to use as the played-back sound.

1 Claims 24 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 23, wherein at least one of the  
2 transmitted addresses is a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claims 25 - 27 (canceled)

1 Claim 28 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step  
2 further comprises the step of selecting at least one of the sounds using one of: a dual-tone multi-  
3 frequency (DTMF) capability of the telephone device; a touch-sensitive display screen of the  
4 telephone device; a key sequence operated using keys of the telephone device; or a voice  
5 recognition capability provided by a voice messaging system which records the voice mail  
6 message.

Claims 29 - 89 (canceled)

1 Claim 90 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 20, wherein a telephone call  
2 placed by the caller for creating the voice mail message is transparently extended, without  
3 intervention of the caller, following the caller's completion of the voice mail message, and  
4 wherein the transmitting occurs during the transparent extension, after which the transparently-  
5 extended telephone call is automatically ended.

Claims 91 - 98 (canceled)

1 Claim 99 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of  
2 message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

1 Claim 100 (previously presented): A system for enhancing a voice mail message for playback to a  
2 listener, comprising:

3 means for creating the voice mail message for the listener, by a caller using a telephone  
4 device, the voice mail message comprising a plurality of message segments;

5 means for identifying, by the caller using the telephone device, at least two of the message  
6 segments which are to have background sounds associated therewith;

7 means for selecting, for each of the identified message segments by the caller using the  
8 telephone device, a sound to be associated therewith as the background sound, wherein the

sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are different sounds; and

means for playing back, responsive to a request from the listener for playback of the voice mail message, at least two of the identified message segments for which a sound was selected to be associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently playing back the sound selected as the background sound for each of the played-backed identified message segments, and wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the played-back identified message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound played back for the voice mail message changes at least once during the playback.

Claim 101 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the plurality of message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

Claim 102 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the means for selecting further comprises means for entering, by the caller using the telephone device, a caller-specific personal identification value, and wherein the entering of the caller-specific personal identification value causes the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected, without intervention by the caller.

Claim 103 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means for creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message, wherein the caller-specific profile indicates which sounds are to be selected as background sounds

4 on which days; and wherein the means for selecting further comprises means for automatically  
5 processing the caller-specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments,  
6 thereby causing the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be  
7 automatically selected, based on the day on which the voice mail message is created.

1 Claim 104 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the selected  
2 background sounds are selected randomly from a plurality of available background sounds.

1 Claim 105 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means  
2 for creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message; and  
3 wherein the means for selecting further comprises means for automatically processing the caller-  
4 specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the  
5 sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected  
6 according to the profile, without intervention by the caller.

1 Claim 106 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the means for  
2 selecting further comprises means for selecting each of the sounds, by the caller, from among a  
3 plurality of sounds which are configured as non-updateable sounds selectable from the telephone  
4 device.

1 Claim 107 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the selected  
2 sounds are selected from among a plurality of sounds that are available to, and offered to the

3 caller by, an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 108 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means  
2 for transmitting the selected background sounds from the telephone device to an apparatus on  
3 which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 109 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means  
2 for transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an identifier thereof from the telephone device to  
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, for use by the apparatus to  
4 obtain the played-back sounds.

1 Claim 110 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means  
2 for transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an address thereof from the telephone device to  
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, wherein the transmitted address  
4 for each of the selected sounds is usable for locating a file to use as the played-back sound.

1 Claim 111 (previously presented): A computer program product for enhancing a voice mail  
2 message for playback to a listener, the computer program product embodied on at least one  
3 computer-usable medium and comprising:

4 computer-usable program code for enabling a caller to create the voice mail message for  
5 the listener, using a telephone device, the voice mail message comprising a plurality of message  
6 segments;

7 computer-usable program code for enabling the caller to identify, using the telephone  
8 device, at least two of the message segments which are to have background sounds associated  
9 therewith;

10 computer-usable program code for enabling the caller to select, for each of the identified  
11 message segments by the caller using the telephone device, a sound to be associated therewith as  
12 the background sound, wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of  
13 the message segments are different sounds; and

14 computer-usable program code for playing back, responsive to a request from the listener  
15 for playback of the voice mail message, at least two of the identified message segments for which  
16 a sound was selected to be associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently  
17 playing back the sound selected as the background sound for each of the played-backed identified  
18 message segments, and wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of  
19 the played-back identified message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound  
20 played back for the voice mail message changes at least once during the playback.

1 Claim 112 (previously presented): The computer program product according to Claim 111,  
2 wherein the plurality of message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

1 Claim 113 (previously presented): The computer program product according to Claim 111,  
2 wherein the computer-usable program code for enabling the caller to select further comprises  
3 computer-usable program code for enabling the caller to select at least one of the sounds using  
4 one of: a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) capability of the telephone device; a touch-sensitive

5 display screen of the telephone device; a key sequence operated using keys of the telephone  
6 device; or a voice recognition capability provided by a voice messaging system which records the  
7 voice mail message.

Claims 114 - 115 (canceled)

1 Claim 116 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the sound selected  
2 as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are non-spoken sounds.